

# Traditions

District Publication of  
Fort Thomas Independent Schools



SPECIAL FOCUS:  
**Excellence Keeps Moving Forward**

**SPRING/SUMMER 2022**

# From the Superintendent

At the start of the 2021-22 school year we made a commitment to our school community to “reflect and renew!” Leadership changes and adjustments over the past two years as we responded to the pandemic demanded we reflect on the elements that make the Fort Thomas Independent Schools (FTIS) special. *Renewal* requires a commitment to continuous improvement. Excellence keeps moving! So, FTIS has shifted from responding to change and crisis to dreaming about our future.

We are *Rich in Tradition, Focused on the Future*. To ensure that we continue to prepare students to achieve personal success and provide state-of-the-art programming, FTIS has engaged a variety of stakeholders in developing a Five-Year Strategic Plan. While the plan will include important operational and resource supports, substantive progress will come from collaborative teams tasked with focusing on five key priority areas:

- Positive and Engaged Culture
- Achievement
- Student Experiences and Opportunities
- Individual Student Growth
- Our Portrait of a Graduate: The Fort Thomas Graduate

In this edition of *Traditions*, we highlight examples of how FTIS is moving excellence forward. On pages 4-5,

read more about how we will address each of our priorities by establishing specific goals and measurable objectives developed by teams of staff, students and community members. These teams will evaluate such challenges as how we increase student opportunities for internships, personalize student learning, collaborate across faculty, encourage student ownership and much more.

This edition also shares examples of how each school actively works to honor our commitment to focus on the future and provide students with a world-class education. Finally, we are sharing a student-produced article highlighting the success of FTIS alum **Jac Collinsworth** as well as updates on the incredible support from our Fort Thomas Education Foundation.

In the last two years, we have worked to ensure that students can participate in safe and effective learning environments during a pandemic. On that note, we simply could not be thinking and planning strategically for our future without the patience and support you’ve extended to us. Thank you for inviting us to rely on your immense strength and resilience. Let’s keep moving onward and upward together.

— **Brian Robinson**, Superintendent, Fort Thomas Independent Schools



Moyer students were excited to talk with Superintendent **Brian Robinson** during his recent visit to their classroom.

Cover: Student leadership is illustrated as Moyer 5<sup>th</sup>-graders **Ella Kate Reynolds** and **Vivian Winkler** join kindergarteners (L-R) **Annalise Eten**, **Maxwell Fischer** and **Landra Byers** to focus on reading skills.

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# Recognitions

## 2022 U.S. Presidential Scholars Program

- **Lance Borden** – Semifinalist

## National Merit Finalists

- **Logan Walsh**
- **Katie Wilson**

## FCCLA STAR Event

- **Kate Carris** – Job Interview
- **Madeline Dadosky** – Early Childhood Education
- **Jadyn McGhee** – Say Yes to FCS
- **Ava Torrano** – Leadership
- **Addy Wagner, Kathleen Price** – Focus on Children

## 2022 Governor’s Programs

### Governor’s Scholar Program

- **Jacob Bolling**
- **Kate Carris**
- **Dashiell Dugan**
- **Caroline Slaby**
- **Bianca Hemsath**
- **AnnaLucy Surrey**
- **Sarah Yu**

### Governor’s School for the Arts

- **Chloe Caudill** – Drama
- **Robert Chalk** – Architecture and Design
- **Connor Defevers** – Musical Theatre
- **Olivia Hahn** – Visual Art
- **Logan Holbrook** – Instrumental Music – Piano
- **Sam Hopper** – Musical Theatre
- **Jonah Listerman** – Musical Theatre
- **Kaelin Martin** – Creative Writing
- **Owen Martin** – Architecture and Design
- **Ruby Smith** – Film and Photography
- **AnnaLucy Surrey** – Film and Photography

### Governor’s School for Entrepreneurs

- **Kate Carris**
- **Sam Hopper**
- **Eva Sarakatsannis**
- **Garrett Strange**
- **Jackson Wilson**

## 2021-22 State Champions

### Individual Champions

- **Cole Noah** – STLP – 3D Design
- **Jacob Hudson** – SkillsUSA – Masonry
- **Caden Schroder, Dash Macke** – TSA – Computer Integrated Manufacturing
- **Megan Greene, Julia Heck, Savannah King, Lindsay Thompson, Honor Valentine** – FBLA – Community Service Project

### Team Champions

- **E-Sports**
- **Odyssey of the Mind**
  - HHS Team
  - HMS Team
- **We the People**

## 2021-22 Cappies

- **Best Musical** – *Crazy For You*
- **Best Song** – *Slap That Bass*
- **Lead Actor in a Musical** – **Jameson Zoller**
- **Comic Actor in a Musical** – **Connor Defevers**
- **Female Dancer** – **Emmarie Brewer**
- **Stage Management and Crew** – **Rowan Cavanaugh, John Dougherty, Bradley Gronceck**
- **Light Design** – **Nate Culyer, Charlie Kreyling, KJ Langlinais and Crew**

## KMEA All-State

### Jazz Band

- **Logan Holbrook** – Piano

### Orchestra

- **Harrison Pawsat** – Cello
- **Adam Pawlak** – Viola
- **Caden Schroeder** – Violin

### Women’s Chorus

- **Kathryn Buschle**

### Men’s Chorus

- **Evan Stuart**
- **Jameson Zoller**

### Junior High Chorus

- **Norah Shadwell**

### Children’s Chorus

- **Maggie Frimming**
- **Maggie Hair**
- **Avni Jani**
- **Ella Kate Reynolds**
- **Lucy Schill**
- **Brielle Stanford**
- **William Twehues**
- **Kit Valentine**



# We are RICH in TRADITION, FOCUSED on the FUTURE

The Five-Year Strategic Plan for Fort Thomas Independent Schools (FTIS) is all about continuous improvement. In short, it's about building on our tradition of excellence and ensuring every single FTIS student receives a world-class education to achieve personal success. In order to bring our vision into reality, our new Strategic Plan focuses on five priority areas:

1. **Positive and Engaged Culture**—To institute a system where trust is built, passion is inspired, relationships are developed, authenticity is respected and solutions are determined.
2. **Achievement**—To sustain top performance levels and expand honors across the system, including the closure of academic achievement gaps and assurance of success for all student subgroup populations.
3. **Student Experiences and Opportunities**—To provide all students in preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade an enriched learning experience that incorporates intentional preparedness for college, career and life.
4. **Individual Student Growth**—To promote continuous growth and individual success for each student based

upon an articulated, collaboratively developed plan that addresses needs, aptitudes and interests.

5. **Portrait of a Graduate**—To personalize learning in such a way that fosters student ability to develop essential competencies that lead to the ownership and reflection of their personal growth.

For each priority area, FTIS has identified strategies and activities that will support the realization of these continuous improvement efforts. For instance, with the priority area "Positive and Engaged Culture" we've included an intentional strategy to establish a collaborative environment that fosters continuous improvement. One of the associated activities will be integrating structured Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) in schools where staff can work together to analyze data and make actionable plans to address immediate learning needs.

"As our Five-Year Strategic Plan transitions into full implementation stage," says **Bill Bradford**, assistant superintendent for teaching and learning, "our entire community will see the deliberate interconnectedness among each of the priority areas, as well as the objectives, strategies and activities that align."



HHS senior **Brady Russell** examines the human muscular system in his dual-credit Anatomy and Physiology class.

To empower stakeholder voice and spark action, FTIS has formed Leadership and Implementation Teams, one for each priority area, to lead and support the District's work in advancing and elevating the work of the Strategic Plan. These teams will focus on:

- Evaluating and measuring the District's progress
- Monitoring implementation across the District and recommending next steps
- Engaging representative peers in the implementation process
- Providing technical guidance and professional development
- Identifying immediate priorities and responses to district initiatives

A representative group of members, including a chairperson (one of the District's five school principals), will comprise each Leadership and Implementation Team. The remainder of each team will include a:

- Grade 3–5 teacher
- Grade 6–8 teacher
- Grade 9–12 teacher
- Noncertified representative
- Other certified representative
- Grade 9–12 student



Woodfill kindergartener **Zoey Richter** focuses on her classroom assignment.

- Parent/Guardian or community member
- Another administrator

District-level Central Office staff will also associate with each Leadership and Implementation Team for additional maintenance and aid.

FTIS will formally implement the Five-Year Strategic Plan in the 2022–23 academic year. "This year has been about conceptualization as well as evaluating and assessing our District's needs," says Bradford. "We now have a structure and a system to carry out our intentions, and we're eagerly anticipating how the enactment of our strategic priorities will better deliver a world-class education to every student."

## FORT THOMAS INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

### Strategic Plan 2022–2027

#### Positive and Engaged Culture

To institute a system where trust is built, passion is inspired, relationships are developed, authenticity is respected, and solutions are determined.

#### Achievement

To sustain top performance levels and expand honors across the system, including the closure of academic achievement gaps and assurance of success for all student subgroup populations.

#### Student Experiences and Opportunities

To provide all students in Preschool through 12<sup>th</sup> grade an enriched learning experience that incorporates intentional preparedness for college, career, and life.

#### Individual Student Growth

To promote continuous growth and individual success for each student based upon an articulated, collaboratively developed plan that addresses needs, aptitudes, and interests.

#### Portrait of a Graduate – The Fort Thomas Graduate

To personalize learning in such a way that fosters student ability to develop essential competencies that lead to the ownership and reflection of their personal growth.



J

JOHNSON  
elementary

# Johnson Elementary School

## Whole-Hearted Learning

One instructional strategy in education is called “personalized learning.” It’s about tailoring education in ways that meet each student’s needs, interests and strengths so that students obtain mastery at the highest level possible. Sound familiar? It’s at the heart of a Johnson Elementary School (JES) education.

You can see personalized learning in action during “Genius Hour,” facilitated by Library Media Specialist **Marie Zimmerman**. Genius Hour is designed to teach students the research process in an engaging way by choosing a research topic they are passionate about, applying research methods and then sharing their learning.

“Students get to learn about something that interests them while also learning how to research,” says Zimmerman. “Additionally, students become masters of their learning when they teach other classmates.”

Students begin by generating a question that drives their research. This year, students came up with ideas like:

- How do I create a quality podcast about the NFL?
- How can I design and sew a skirt?
- How do you use a pottery wheel to create pottery?
- How do you 3D print your own design?
- How do you prepare to climb a mountain?



Johnson 2<sup>nd</sup>-grader **Carmela Lindsey** is all in while participating in a COSI on Wheels hands-on activity.



Johnson kindergarteners (L-R) **Pam Fair, Colin Smith and Barrett Browning** take turns using equipment brought to school by COSI on Wheels.

Students then use the Big 6 Method for Research and finally share their findings during a class presentation day, STEAM Night or during a Fun Station at the end of the school year.

“By giving students freedom to pursue their curiosities, they are naturally inclined to work through and learn the research method,” says Zimmerman.

It’s exactly what 5<sup>th</sup>-grader **Elin Hucker** loves about Genius Hour. “I like that you get to pick whatever you want to learn about; it isn’t chosen by someone else,” she says.

Visual Art teacher **Jennifer Flynn** is also supporting a new endeavor that embodies the personalized learning strategy. In order to improve math scores, JES decided to engage students in a way that would increase their curiosity and enthusiasm for math. A group of 5<sup>th</sup>-grade students, led by Flynn, is leading the newly formed Art Advisory Council, which is working on ways to increase students’ positivity toward math.

Member **Adalyn Phelps** explains the council’s objective: “We all get to work together to get kids to like math and show them how math relates to the real world.” The group is meeting twice a week, and so far the council has developed two math posters that showcase math concepts to spur engagement.

In late March, the Art Advisory Council began creating custom math trading cards with student incentive plans. The council hoped to share the initiative with JES students in May, which it would like to dub Math Month.

Flynn says the students have exceeded her expectations: “They’ve personalized their purpose and are eager to apply what they know about math to help others get excited about the subject matter. Their focus, energy and heart are contagious!”

M

MOYER  
elementary

# Moyer Elementary School

## Learning to Lead

At Moyer Elementary School (MES) no student is too young to step into a leadership role. Through MES’s Leader in Me process, students not only have opportunities to lead at every grade level, they’re also empowered to create leadership initiatives.

“Our Lighthouse Leadership Team, made up of MES teachers, works with students and the rest of the staff to find solutions to areas that need attention at our school,” explains MES Principal **Dawn Laber**. Students from kindergarten to 5<sup>th</sup> grade apply for roles on these student-led leadership teams to spearhead initiatives:

- **Birthday Brigade:** Each morning, students visit classrooms to sing to students who have a birthday and give them a small gift to make them feel special.
- **Hallway Leader:** At the start of each day, students welcome their classmates throughout the hallways, ensuring students know where they need to be and encouraging school spirit.
- **Lost and Found:** Students organize items in the Lost and Found and are responsible for returning identified items to their owners. The team also helps pack up unclaimed items to be donated each quarter.
- **Roundup Gang:** Students lead MES’s monthly Mustang Roundup when the whole student body gathers in the gym to celebrate their progress on schoolwide goals. This team creates the content and leads the gathering.
- **Habit at Home Group:** Students encourage classmates to practice their Healthy Habits at home and give out prizes for this effort. The team is in each hallway during designated times each morning and collects the Healthy at Home Habit sheets, which encourage students to keep up the good work.
- **Grounds Crew:** Students walk the grounds, put

away items that shouldn’t be left outside, pick up trash and encourage their classmates to do the same.

- **Recycling Pickup Crew:** Students collect and empty classroom recycling bins weekly. This team encourages their classmates to recycle eligible items and celebrate sustainability efforts.

Lighthouse coordinator and 2<sup>nd</sup>-grade teacher **Loren Noah** says the Leader in Me model helps students begin to take ownership of their participation in their community. “Each student plays a role, providing them with a sense of community within the school,” says Noah.

**Katy Wall**, a Lighthouse Team Leader and 1<sup>st</sup>-grade teacher, agrees: “Students on Leadership Teams recognize the important role they play in leadership. They feel valuable and realize how they can have a larger impact on our school.”

It’s working for 1<sup>st</sup>-grader **Luke Mucaney**, a Birthday Brigade Team member who shares, “I like celebrating people’s special day, spreading kindness and seeing people be celebrated.”

For 5<sup>th</sup>-grader and Roundup Gang member **Olivia Griffith**, being part of the team means a lot. “I love it because all the people are kind, caring and compassionate. It’s fun to get everyone excited about Moyer.”

“We love giving students opportunities to lead our school,” adds Wall. “Their leadership grows our school community while also increasing their own skillsets. Everybody wins when students lead.”



Moyer Roundup Gang students begin their May meeting by leading the school in the Pledge of Allegiance.



WOODFILL  
elementary

## Woodfill Elementary School

# The Genius behind Professional Learning Communities

Woodfill Elementary School (WES) began facilitating Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) four years ago. Simply put, explains Principal **Keith Faust**, PLCs are teachers coming together to learn—"groups of educators who meet regularly, work collaboratively and share ideas, challenges and expertise."

**Michelle LaMantia**, 3<sup>rd</sup>-grade teacher, adds, "PLCs allow us a time to be in community with our colleagues to learn from one another's genius and grow as professionals."

A vital part of WES's collaborative and continuously improving culture, the PLCs meet every Thursday for 55 minutes for professional conversations around a variety of topics. Each grade level meets together, and specials teachers (Art, PE, etc.) join in with a grade level to evaluate, refine and improve teaching strategies, curriculum, student opportunities and more.

The principal sets the focus for each week's meeting. Past topics include curriculum, Leader in Me booster lessons, reading strategies, autism, student data, technology integration, and social and emotional learning. "When the schedule is set, the meetings are purposeful and the content is relevant, the meetings are a success," says Faust.

First-grade teacher **Carrie Skirvin** says, "Our PLCs allowed teachers to explore Jennifer Serravallo's *The Reading Strategies Book*. It provided many great ideas for reading workshop mini lessons and ideas for developing goals for every reader."

Serravallo's book has proved to be a valued part of 5<sup>th</sup>-grade teacher **Dawn Hils**'s classroom too. Hils has implemented

"fluency partners," where students work in pairs to listen and coach each other as they take turns reading aloud. "Out of the dozens of resource books I've collected over the years, this one is possibly the most useful to any reading teacher," says Hils.

"Teachers are so busy with day-to-day challenges in the classroom that if we don't dedicate time to our own professional development, we forfeit its incredible benefits,"



Woodfill 4<sup>th</sup>-graders **Kameron Lanich** and **Griffin Jacobs** share ideas with teachers **Elizabeth Waymeyer**, **Rachel Caswell** and **Scott Kraus**.

says Faust. He has witnessed the undeniable advantages of PLCs. "Teachers find themselves working smarter because they have been given time to collaborate and share ideas."

Perhaps one of the best outcomes of PLCs is how unifying they are for the entire WES faculty. "Getting everyone on the same page and working collectively can be very powerful," Faust observes. "I see so many great things happening around our building. I want teachers to be inspired by one another. Their genius is too great not to be shared."

## Highlands Middle School

HIGHLANDS  
MIDDLE

# New Schedule, New Possibilities

Highlands Middle School (HMS) has prioritized offering a wide range of exploratory learning opportunities. To accomplish this, HMS will be moving from a six-period to a seven-period schedule for the 2022-23 academic year.

"We want students to begin to identify early on where their curiosities and talents lie," explains HMS Principal **Erika Volpenhein**. "We also want to ensure that students are getting the support they need to master the core content curriculum and to offer students any intervention or enrichment they need along the way."

In the new schedule, the period currently known as "focus" will become "flex"—a truly flexible time during which students can attend clubs and activities to extend their learning and teachers can intervene with intentionality to help students grow along their individual pathways. "This new schedule will enhance our ability to give students options to explore pre-pathway courses in 21<sup>st</sup>-century fields," says Volpenhein.

**Karen Kampschmidt**, 6<sup>th</sup>-grade language arts teacher, says the HMS staff is currently using part of its professional development time to plan sessions for flex time and to learn about the software program they will use to manage student activity signups. "Flex enrichment offerings could include things like yoga, robotics, poetry writing, counseling services and service projects," she says. Flex time will also allow for teachers to more seamlessly intervene with students for makeup work, extended testing time or targeted skill work.



HMS 8<sup>th</sup>-graders **Landry Riesenbeck** and **Matthew Meyers** collaborate on a project in their engineering class.

To explore possible future career pathways, students also will have the option of taking new courses in 2022-23 in computer science, graphic design, personal finance, biomedicine, leadership dynamics and more. Because most encore courses are offered quarterly, students can experience up to 12 pre-pathway courses per year.

"We want to ensure exposure to pre-pathway courses in the arts, computer science, social sciences, high-level math and project-based learning," says Volpenhein. "No other middle school in the region is providing this kind of student experience; it's exciting!"



HMS 6<sup>th</sup>-grader **Coleman Strange** receives one-on-one instruction from **Brian McDowell** in STEM class.

Seventh-grade math teacher **Scott Pahren** is excited about students transitioning from app consumers to app creators in a new App Creators course. "App Creators introduces students to computer science and the concepts of computational thinking through the creation of mobile apps," says Pahren. "Students will be challenged to be creative and innovative as they collaboratively design and develop mobile solutions to engaging, authentic problems."

Art teacher **Collin Shadwell** will offer the new Digital Art course next year where students get an in-depth look at Photoshop and Illustrator. Shadwell says, "As a professional photographer, painter and potter, I have found graphic design useful in all those fields. Any student wanting to pursue a career in the arts will find these programs highly beneficial."

HMS students will also have the option of taking a variety of skills-based music courses like band, strings and choir. "These courses aren't based on a student's grade level but rather their interests and potential," points out Volpenhein. "We believe that every student has genius of some kind, and we need to capitalize on it. Our music programs are some of the best in the region, but we want to improve them and compete more at state and national levels."

Ultimately, the new seven-period day schedule will allow students to grow their Portrait of a Graduate competencies and their capacity to make more informed scheduling decisions for Highlands High School and beyond.





**Highlands**  
High School

HIGHLANDS  
HIGH

# Career Pathways Catapult Students Forward

Highlands students are stepping into real-world professional career experiences through four Career Pathways: Early Childhood Education, Computer Science, Business, and Health Innovations. Beyond gaining real-world experience, students also earn free college credits and/or industry certifications.

## Early Childhood Education (ECE)

**Career Pathway:** Students interested in working with children in an educational or medical setting run a preschool program for three weeks in May, complete practicum hours at three local elementary schools, earn three Kentucky Certified Industry Certifications and can complete a paid apprenticeship through local childcare centers. "Students earn certifications before graduation, making them extremely marketable," says **Ahren Wagner**, family and consumer sciences teacher.

Senior **Hailey Barton**, who has a childcare center apprenticeship, says her interest in early childhood ed is at an all-time high after getting to work in the field. "Without this experience, I don't know if I would actually be going to college for early childhood education and pursuing my love for helping children," shares Hailey.

**Computer Science (CS) Career Pathway:** Math teacher **Sam Volpenhein**, who oversees CS, equips students with problem-solving skills and gives them opportunities to exercise their creativity through app creation. Every student has the flexibility to take dual-credit and AP courses along with the Apple-specific content. Students learn to work with the coding language in a development environment to make apps for the iPhone and iPad. "They learn practical skills in hopes of earning a valuable industry certification," says Volpenhein, "and the way they've used the strengths of their classmates to catalyze their progress and improve their products is crucial to any future job."

Senior **Quinton Wehby** loves the freedom to pursue his ideas. "An app can be made for any business, real-world problem or whatever is going on in my life that I'm interested in," says Quinton.

**Business Career Pathway:** Students complete social leadership projects for a local nonprofit and participate in a weekly small-business internship. "The projects touch on the soft skills employers and universities are craving from their future hires and alumni," says business teacher **Elise Carter**, "and foster collaboration, communication, problem-solving and mentorships." The Business Career Pathway offers the option to earn dual credit in six college courses and two AP courses.

Senior **Honor Valentine** says the Business Career Pathway has been the most impactful experience of her high school curriculum. "I learned so much not only about business topics but also public speaking, how to talk to business professionals and how to be respectful with college structured classes."

## Health Innovations Career Pathway:

Students interested in health sciences, including radiology, veterinary medicine, nursing, dentistry and medicine, can pursue studies in medical terminology, Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR), automated external defibrillator (AED), first aid and emergency procedures certification. All students must participate in healthcare job shadowing, rotating at local offices specializing in chiropractic, orthodontic and veterinary care. Students receive college credit for two courses in this the pathway.

**Dr. Rebecca Manyet**, Health Innovations coordinator, knows that it can be overwhelming to decide on a career path. "This course guides students through the steps needed to make a more confident decision."

Senior **Kennedy Baioni** feels ready to pursue her future in healthcare. "Taking Medical Terminology gave me a head

start on mandatory college courses," says Kennedy. "Every aspect of this pathway has helped with preparation and knowledge of the future."

HHS's Career Pathways are key in helping students discern what they want to pursue after graduation and in realizing their potential. "Career Pathways are a significant part of helping students accomplish their dreams," says Principal **John Darnell**. "They illuminate the way forward."



HHS sophomore **Madeline Lecky** gains real-world experience in early childhood education while working with preschooler **Turner Hood**.



Children in the ECE Career Pathway three-week preschool program talk about the book *The Wonky Donkey* just read to them by guest reader **Bill Bradford**, assistant superintendent for teaching and learning.

## Jac Collinsworth: Natural, Bright, Charismatic

By Emerson Fraley, Ryne Wiseman, and Owen Yelton — Staff Writers, HHS Journalism

Growing up with big shoes to fill, and the spotlight on him from a young age, **Jac Collinsworth** certainly is already on his way to having a great career in broadcasting. He currently works for NBC and is part of the pregame show for *Sunday Night Football*.

Collinsworth grew up not far from Highlands High School (HHS), attended Ruth Moyer Elementary, then graduated from HHS having played three sports: football, basketball and baseball.

He thought of getting into broadcasting early on. In fact, he was part of the first broadcasting group at HHS where he learned a lot, including how the business worked and how to put together and edit videos.

"When I came into high school the building was being renovated, and there was construction everywhere," says Collinsworth. "But one thing that was finished was the broadcast studio, so I signed up for the class and we had a whole bunch of cameras. We would run around the school filming and putting videos together. We had live announcements via video every day, and that's when it really became a realistic look at the business."

After graduating, Collinsworth attended the University of Notre Dame and pursued his passion for film and broadcasting. At first, he couldn't cover football because the upperclassmen already had that position. Instead, he covered some less visible sports, which helped him improve his interviewing skills. "I covered fencing and boxing. I interviewed basketball players and talked to swimmers; anybody that would let me interview them, I interviewed," he explains. "I got a lot better at asking and writing questions, and I learned how to do everything I wanted to do in every other sport."

Finally, a position opened up, and Collinsworth became accustomed to the spotlight and attention while covering football. "Notre Dame naturally gets a lot of attention, and a lot of fans care about Notre Dame football, so when you're interviewing the players you get a lot of views. Obviously, NBC's



Jac Collinsworth

there covering every home game, so there was a lot of exposure around covering that team."

After Notre Dame, he eventually found his first job working with ESPN, then got an opportunity of a lifetime with NBC. He covers such events as Notre Dame football, the Kentucky Derby, *Sunday Night Football* and more. Recently he was on sports' biggest stage as a sideline commentator during the Bengals' run at the Super Bowl.

Despite moving on to bigger things, Collinsworth stays involved in the Fort Thomas community. "I'm still very close with a whole bunch of my classmates," comments Collinsworth. "I still keep in touch with **Bill Poff**, the HHS broadcasting teacher, and go to Highlands football games. And I think once the world gets back to normal, I'll be able to come in and watch you guys do some shows live."

Poff describes Collinsworth as a leader among his peers at Highlands. "Jac was always a very talented communicator," says Poff. "From the first moment he stepped in front of a camera it was obvious he was a natural. During his time with us, he became serious about his work and became a leader of the broadcasting team."

Collinsworth has even taken some HHS kids, such as **Brennan Bucher**, under his wing and helped them with their passion for broadcasting. Brennan has learned a lot from Collinsworth. "Jac has helped me a lot," says Brennan. "Obviously, he knows what he's doing and is a professional. Just having him as a mentor and somebody I can go to is a huge help and something I don't take for granted."

With the broadcasting program at HHS continuing to grow and improve, Collinsworth continues to be impressed by the leaps of progress he sees: "Every time I look it seems like you guys are doing something new, whether it's a live connection with the football program, putting a live show up on the jumbotron, or even the announcements. I remember the very beginning of all this when I was here, and to see what it's become is pretty awesome."



THE NESTIES  
*The Best of the Nest*

On April 14, Fort Thomas Independent Schools (FTIS) and the Fort Thomas Education Foundation cohosted the inaugural NESTIES: Best of the Nest. Faculty, staff, parents and community joined at the Fort Thomas Mess Hall to honor our 2022 Outstanding Teachers of the Year along with several other teachers being recognized for significant contributions during the academic year.

In addition to celebrating the amazing accomplishments of our three Outstanding Teachers of the Year (one each from elementary, middle and high school), a new award was introduced. The Outstanding Support Staff of the Year

Award honors a supporting services employee who has made an exceptional contribution to FTIS schools, students and community. Winners extended themselves beyond basic required duties and contributed to students and the school community by enhancing student learning, creating positive relationships and making school or the office a better place.

It was a wonderful night, recognizing the contributions of several faculty and staff that help make Fort Thomas Independent Schools so great. We look forward to seeing everyone for the second annual NESTIES: Best of the Nest on April 13, 2023.

Save the Date—2023  
THE NESTIES  
*The Best of the Nest*  
April 13, 2023





Guest Speaker, **Nolan Marx**, of Franklin Covey



**Cindy Graves**



**Melissa Trimbach**



**Lisa Duckworth, Brian McDowell, and Karen Kampschmidt**



**Kristina Sheehy, Jennifer Flynn, and Ashley Dikeos**



**John Darnell, Jean Becker, and Emily Haffey**



**Cory Rushman, Guy Ponzer, and Jeff Beach**



**Jeff Schneider, Jeremy Hall, and Pam Schultz**



**Jennifer Forg, Kelly Booth, and Julie Kuhnhein**



**Peter Winkler, Loren Noah, and Mary Kinsella**



**Ann Meyer, Ahren Wagner, and Jamee Flaherty**



**Elizabeth Waymeyer, Keith Faust, Lori Reinhart, and Kristen Banocy**



View our Teacher of The Year  
videos made by HHS students  
in the Filmmaking and  
Broadcasting class



View our Nesties  
Photos Gallery





## Award Winners

**Lori Reinhart**

NESTIES 2022 Outstanding Support Staff of the Year

**Jeremy Hall**

NESTIES 2022 Outstanding Support Staff of the Year

**Jean Becker**

NESTIES 2022 High School Teacher of the Year

**Melissa Trimbach**

NESTIES 2022 Middle School Teacher of the Year

**Cindy Graves**

NESTIES 2022 Elementary Teacher of the Year

**Kelly Booth**

National Board Teacher Certification

**Ahren Wagner**

FCCLA Spirit of Advising Award

**Guy Ponzer**

NKYEC Extraordinary Service

**Jennifer Flynn**

Golden Apple

**Loren Noah**

Golden Apple

**Brian McDowell**

Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching

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### 2022 Nesties Event Committee

Kristen Banocy

Kelly Booth

Bill Bradford

Keith Faust

Jennifer Flynn

Karen Kampschmidt

Mary Kinsella

Sally Race

Cory Rushman

Pam Schultz

Amy Shaffer

Elizabeth Waymeyer

Peter Winkler



Awards Recipients: Guy Ponzer, Ahren Wagner, Kelly Booth, Lori Reinhart, Melissa Trimbach, Jeremy Hall, Cindy Graves,  
Jean Becker, Loren Noah, Brian McDowell, Jennifer Flynn

STAY CONNECTED | FTEF.ORG | FTEF@FTEF.ORG | 859.815.2004

## Bluebird Nation! Join the Foundation Club to get a front row seat!

Join us under the lights and help our schools while cheering from the best seat in the house. Foundation Club members receive reserved parking, a private entrance with no lines, a complementary pregame meal and more.



**Memberships are LIMITED!**  
If you join the Foundation Club by  
June 15, 2022 you will be entered  
to win a Bluebird Family Pass.  
Join today at [ftef.org](http://ftef.org).



### Highlands Football 2022 Varsity Schedule

- August 5—Louisville Male Scrimmage (Away)
- August 12—Blue/White Scrimmage (Home)
- August 20—South Warren (Away)
- August 26—Simon Kenton (Home)
- September 2—Campbell County (Away)
- September 9—Raceland (Home)
- September 16—Ryle (Away)
- September 23—Dixie (Home)
- September 30—Connor (Away)
- October 7—Boone County (Home)
- October 14—Covington Catholic (Away)
- October 21—Cooper (Home)

### Save the Date! 2022 Homecoming Weekend

**October 21-23, 2022**

We hope to see you  
back at the Nest!

### Planning a Reunion? LET US HELP!

- Reunion Resource Kit
- Tour Coordination
- Alumni Contact Information

859.815.2004 • [ftef@ftef.org](mailto:ftef@ftef.org)

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# The Blue Feather Society

## FTEF Membership Program Supporting Educational Excellence

**The FTEF Blue Feather Society is expanding!** This membership program helps sustain the legacy of excellence we have come to expect in our schools for current and future generations. Your annual membership helps the FTEF give back in big ways to our schools and students.

### *New* – Blue Feather Annual Ambassador Membership

An annual payment of \$2,000 or can be broken into monthly payments of \$170.

### Blue Feather Annual Membership

An annual payment of \$1,000 or can be broken into monthly payments of \$85.

### Membership includes:

- Elegant blue feather gift signifying your annual support
- Invitation to the annual holiday party hosted by FTEF
- Annual recognition as a Blue Feather Society Member in the *FTEF Annual Report*

### Ambassador members also receive:

- VIP invitations to special events
- Recognition as Blue Feather Ambassador Member in *Annual Report*

*Put a feather in your cap and join today at [fitef.org](http://fitef.org)!*



## Welcome Krissy Richard

**K**rissy Richard joined the FTEF in April 2022 as coordinator. Her experience in the hospitality industry and extensive volunteer work makes her the perfect person to round out the FTEF team. Since 2014, Richard has been active as a Woodfill Elementary PTO board member and has held several leadership positions including co-chair of the Big Top Festival for three consecutive years.

A Fort Thomas native, Richard attended Moyer Elementary and Highlands High School until her family relocated to the East Coast where she completed high school. She and her husband, Matt, moved back to Fort Thomas in 2006. Their four children, Josiah (10<sup>th</sup>), Kaylee Grace (7<sup>th</sup>), Eli (5<sup>th</sup>) and Micah (1<sup>st</sup>) all attend Fort Thomas schools.

**Erin Benke** will remain with the FTEF in a newly created, part-time role of bookkeeper so she can more effectively focus her accounting degree and extensive bookkeeping experience to benefit the FTEF.



*Krissy Richard*

# FTEF Looks to the Future

**T**he FTEF spent last year celebrating our 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary and all we have accomplished since our inception. Celebrations are important so we can ALL feel good about what we have collectively achieved. But we know that our work is never finished, because excellence requires constant change. We know that kids entering kindergarten next year will be graduating (in 2035!) in a different world from our 2022 graduates.

The goal of the FTEF is to make sure that every student on their FTIS journey is learning in state-of-the-art-facilities with innovative materials for each grade. Our quest for educational excellence will continue for generations to come, and we know we can't do what we do without your support. So, thank you for all you have done to help us over the last two decades, and thank you for your help as we continue to drive excellence forward.



*Thanks to the support of our community, we have raised **\$84,982.83** for the FTIS Film and Broadcasting Department including an Audio Engineering Lab, PTZ (pan, tilt and zoom robotic video cameras) and other cameras.*

## Ways to Make Your Gift Grow:

- Company match
- Give company stock
- Include the FTEF in your planned giving

## Here's What You Can Do:

- **Donate.** Every dollar helps every student in every school. No gift is too small (or too big!). Make your donation at [fitef.org](http://fitef.org).
- **Volunteer.** Join us for Volunteer Fridays at the Birdhouse (2504 Memorial Parkway). Please let us know in advance if you are planning to come so we have work planned and organized for you.
- **Sponsor.** Your business can get valuable exposure and help our schools at the same time. For more information visit [fitef.org/sponsorships](http://fitef.org/sponsorships).



*Since our inception, we have raised **\$774,021.92**, for STEM programming, including the tower garden at Woodfill Elementary.*



# FORT THOMAS

INDEPENDENT SCHOOLS

H

H

J

M

W

HIGHLANDS  
HIGH

HIGHLANDS  
MIDDLE

JOHNSON  
elementary

MOYER  
elementary

WOODFILL  
elementary



## You're Invited!

The Board of Education of Fort Thomas Independent Schools meetings take place the second Monday of each month at 6:30pm. Visit our website to confirm the time and place.

## Board of Education

Ann Meyer, Chairperson  
Lisa Duckworth, Vice-Chairperson  
Jeff Beach  
Brad Fennell  
Julie Kuhnhein

## Central Office Administrators

Brian Robinson, Superintendent  
Jamee Flaherty, Assistant Superintendent  
for Student Services  
Bill Bradford, Assistant Superintendent  
for Teaching and Learning

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